National Studies Connect School Libraries and Student Achievement

MASL
Maryland Association of School Librarians
School Library Media Centers...Bring Students and Information Together

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Achievement Matters Most

Nineteen state studies including Colorado, Pennsylvania, Texas, Alaska, and Florida, provide empirical data to demonstrate that school library media programs make a difference in student achievement. Findings from the studies show that reading and other test scores increase when certain conditions are in place. Maryland School Library Media Programs provide access to a variety of resources and services to help students become 21st Century Learners. Through an information literacy skills instructional program that is integrated into the curriculum, school library media specialists teach students how to become lifelong learners, informed decision-makers, and effective users of ideas and information.

National Finding:

Student achievement increases when …

- There is adequate staffing, including at least one full-time certified library media specialist and full-time support person in the library media center. In Pennsylvania and Colorado, test scores increased as much as 15% in schools that had adequately staffed libraries. As library staff increases, there is more time spent on instructional activities.

In Maryland:

- COMAR (13A.05.04.01) requires certified library media specialists be part of an integrated school library media program in every school in Maryland. In 2007-08, 74% of schools reported having a full time library media specialist and 44% reported having support staff present representing 1,357 schools.

National Finding:

Student achievement increases when…

- The library media budget is adequate (e.g. in Texas, the average operating budget per student in elementary school libraries is $22.14). Nationally schools reporting on the AASL Longitudinal survey report spending $7,000 annually—or $12.06 per student—on their LM programs. The top quarter spend $13,500—or $21.02—and the top five percent, $35,000—or $48.02.

In Maryland:

- Per pupil expenditures vary greatly in Maryland local school systems, from $0 to approximately $20/student. Site-based management in schools has greatly impacted the amount of funding available to school library media centers, generally reducing the amounts available.

National Finding:

Student achievement increases when…

- The library media collection is adequate and students borrow materials frequently.
- The library media center has computers with access to library resources, online databases, and the Internet.
- The library program has a collection development policy.

In Maryland:

- Only 32% of Maryland's public schools have library media collections that meet collection guidelines as outlined in Standards for Library Media Programs in Maryland. Quality collections are critical in supporting student learning objectives in the Voluntary State Curriculum and the Core Learning Goals.
- As mandated in Maryland's Regulations (COMAR), local school systems must have a Selection and Evaluation Policy as part of a broader Collection Development Plan.
- As part of the federal Enhancing Education through Technology Program (EETT- Title II, Part D), school systems applied for multi-year competitive grants by forming partnerships to address several priority areas, one of which was acquisition of digital content. All twenty-four school systems in Maryland participate in the MDK-12 Digital Library grant to provide digital resources to schools and to create a purchasing consortium for local school systems. For the 2008-09 school year, students in every public school and participating private schools have access to a suite of nine Social Issues Resources Series (SIRS) databases. For the 2008-09 school year, the same students in middle and high schools also have access to Gale Science Resource Center following an agreement reached with the Division of Library Development Services and the public library community to form the Maryland Library Consortium (MLC).
- 99% of Maryland library media centers report access to the Internet; however, only 97% have automated circulation systems, with 93% having automated online public access catalogs.

National Finding:

Student achievement increases when…

- Library media specialists spend time teaching information literacy to students.
- Library media specialists spend more time on working collaboratively with teachers.
- Library media specialists are school leaders who: meet with principals regularly, provide in-service training to teachers, and serve on curriculum and standards committees.

In Maryland:

Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning, the national school library media guidelines, defines the four roles of the library media specialist. Maryland library media specialists collectively indicate that they spend the following percentage of their time in each role:

- Teacher – provides direct instruction to students. Library media specialists report that, on average, 46% of their time is spent in the role of teacher.
- Instructional Partner – collaborates with teachers to deliver instruction across the curriculum. Library media specialists report that, on average, 11% of their time is spent in the role of instructional partner.
- Information Specialist – provides leadership and expertise in acquiring and evaluating information resources in all formats for students and teachers. Library media specialists report that, on average, 13% of their time is spent in the role of information specialist.
- Program Administrator – manages all aspects of the library media program. Library media specialists report that, on average, 13% of their time is spent in the role of program administrator.

- Library media specialists are responsible for providing professional development in the use of instructional technology in 22% of Maryland's schools, with many serving as their school Technology Coordinator.

National Finding:

Student achievement increases when…

- Students visit the library frequently.
- The library media center is open longer hours.

In Maryland:

- In 53% of school library media centers, instruction is delivered in regularly scheduled (fixed) classes; in 26% of the library media centers, classes are flexibly scheduled and in 19% of the schools the library media program classes are both fixed and flexible. When library media centers have a heavily fixed schedule of classes, there is little time for individual or small groups of students to use the media center. In addition, teachers often are not able to bring their classes to the media center for research or "just in time learning." There is also generally less collaboration among teachers and library media specialists when classes are fixed.

For further information on national studies on the impact of school library media programs, go to:
http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/resourceguides/studentachievement.cfm
http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/s/slw3_2008.pdf

Data on National School Library Media Programs were taken from
AASL - School Libraries Count!: The Second National Survey of School Library Media Programs - 2008
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/schlibrariesandyou/slcsurvey.cfm

Data on Maryland School Library Media Programs were taken from
Facts about School Library Media Programs in Maryland, 2006-2007
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/technology/library_media

Maryland State Department of Education Fact Book, 2007-2008
http://marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/FCB60C1D-6CC2-4270-BDAA-153D67247324/18996/FACT_BOOK_20072008_12309.pdf

Maryland Technology Inventory: Where Do We Stand in 2007?
http://md.ontargetus.com/

For information on the MSDE Instructional Technology and School Library Media Program or information about MASL, contact:

Jay Bansbach, Specialist (MSDE)
Phone: (410) 767-0442
Email: jbansbach@msde.state.md.us

Jayne Moore, Director (MSDE)
Phone: (410) 767-0382
Email: jmoore@msde.state.md.us

Michele Forney – President, MASL
Phone: (301) 805-2690
Email: michele.forney@pgcps.org